A SERMON OF REpentance.

A very godlie and profitable Sermon preached at Lee in Essex by Arthur Dent, Minister of Gods word: and published at the request of sundrie godlie and well disposed persons.

1583.

The vij. of March.

Ionach. 2. 8.

They that wait upon lieng vanities forsake their owne mercie.

Imprinted at London, by Arnolde Hatfield, for Iohn Harison, and are to be sold at the Greyhound in Paules Churchyard.

1587

In Concionem Arthuri Dent
G. Pewdæi Carmen.

MAturè reſipiſce, precor, peccataq; linque,
Qui legis aut audis, quiſquis es, iſtud opus
Sin noua peccatis peccata prioribus addes,
Olim hæc te contra Cóncio teſtis erit:
Hæc aliquot lecta flentes ſua crimina, multum
Mutarunt mores, & noua vita placet.

The ſame in Engliſh.

THou that doeſt read or heare this (work,
I wiſh thee to do this:
Repent in time, and ſinne forſake,
Amend that is amiſſe.
But if thou wilt adde ſinne to ſinne,
not minding to amend,
This Sermon ſhall a witneſſe be,
againſt thee in the end.
Some that haue heard this read of late,
lamenting much their ſin:
Haue changde their former manners,
and a new life now begin.

TO THE READER.

ALthough I was moſt vnwilling that this poore talent & trauell of mine ſhould euer haue been broched abroade, and come to light; both bicauſe it may ſeem as a Candle lighted at noone day; as alſo bicauſe manie other mens dooinges might more worthily a great deale haue been publiſhed, and committed vnto letters: yet bicauſe diuers which heard it preached with a liuely voice, were very inſtant, yea and more than importunate with me to haue it publiſhed, vſing ſuch reaſons as I could not greatly gainſay, I did at the laſt yeeld to their requeſt, and ſo this vntimely fruite is come abroade, to be ſolde in open markets. Let no man be offended that I haue not ſtrained my ſelfe to flie an high pitch, to fome out the froth of mans wiſedome, and to make a great ſhew of learning, by blowing

ing the bladder of vanitie til it burſt with ſwelling. For that is not my vſe, I ſeeke eſpecially the ſaluation of the ſimple and ignorant, and therefore ſtowpe downe to their reach and capacitie. Therefore I beſeech thee gentle Reader, accept my good meaning: Read this without preiudice, like it as thou profiteſt, ſo ſhalt thou haue praiſe of God, and comfort in thy conſcience.

A. D.

A SERMON OF REpentance.

The Text, Luke 13. 5.

I tell you nay: but except you repent, you shall all likewise perish.

THe occasion of these wordes of our Lord and Saviour Iesus Christ, was, because there were certaine that shewed him of the *Galileans*, whose blood Pilate had mingled with their owne sacrifices: That is, murdered them as they were sacrificing: & so their blood was mingled with the blood of the beasts which were sacrificed. Those men therefore thought that those *Galileans* were greater sinners than all other *Galileans*, because they had suffered such things: & that those eighteene also, upon whome the Tower in *Siloam* fell and slue them, were sinners aboue all men that dwelt in *Hierusalem*. Wherein they did vtter a secret corruption, naturally ingendered in all men

that is, very sharply to see into the sinnes of others, and seuerely to censure them: but in the meane while to flatter themselues, and to be blindfold in seeing their owne sinnes. For these men thought because the like iudgements did not fall vpon them, therefore they were safe enough, they were not so great sinners, but rather highly in the fauour of God: According as many do falsly suppose, that those are alwaies the worst sort of people, whom God doth most strike, and presse with his punishing hand, hauing forgotten that God doth not keepe an ordinarie rate here below, to punish euery man as he is worst, or to fauour and cocker him as he is best, but onely taketh some examples as he thinketh good, for the instruction and aduertisement of al others, and to be as it were looking glasses, wherein euery man may see his owne face, yea and his owne cause handled, and that God is a seuere reuenger of sinne, that all men may learn by the example of some to tremble and beware, least peraduenture they be worthily constrained to keepe their owne turnes, and to know what they haue deserued. These men which brought these women to our Sauiour Christ had taken

forth this lesson: whereupon our Saviour is iustly occasioned to reprove their erroneous and sinister iudgement, and to teach them that they must not reioyce at the iust punishments of others, but rather to be instructed thereby to repentance.

And further to signifie, that God doth not alwaies most punish the most notorious offenders, as Murtherers, Theeues, Robbers, Whoremasters, Blasphemers, Quarrellers, Scoffers, and such like, but reserueth them vnto the iudgement of the great day, and as it were fatteth them against the day of slaughter, and therefore he answereth them negatiuely, and saith Nay, or not so, but except ye repent, you shall all likewise perish, as if he should say, are you all of this opinion in deed, that only monstrous sinners are punished in this world, and others let alone? or that the Galileans and those eighteene vpon whom the Tower in Siloam fell, were greater sinners than all others? Or do you thinke because the same iudgements haue not light vpon you, therefore you shall scape away in the vaine, and escape the iudgement of God? No, no, you are deceiued. For I say vnto you, that except you mourne and la-

ment

ment for your sins: and fall to some agree-
ment with God in time, (you I say, euen
you which are so ready to condemn others,
and iustifie your selues) shall not onely pe-
rish with the like iudgements in this pre-
sent world, but be euerlastingly condemn-
ned in the world to come. So that our Sa-
uiour in so saying, doth thunder downe a
most dreadful sentence vpon all our heads:
for he concludeth & setteth it downe, that all
men liuing vpon the face of the earth, whe-
ther they be high or low, rich, or poore, young
or old, noble or vnnoble, learned, or vnlear-
ned, simple or politike, of what estate, de-
gree, and condition so euer they be, liuing
and dying without repentance, shall perish
and be damned in hell fire for euer. The
Scriptures are full of such thunderbolts.
Iohn 3. 18. He that beleeueth not is
damned alreadie. And 2. Cor. 13. verse 5.
Proue your selues whether you are in
the faith, examine your selues, know ye
not your selues that Iesus Christ is in you
except ye be reprobates? Where the A-
postle flatly setteth downe that all those
which haue not Christ dwelling in their
hartes by faith, which is the houshold s-
ster of repentance, are no better then re-
probates,

probates, castawaies, and condemned persons. But bicause the most people in these dayes are grosse deceiued in repentance, both concerning what it is, what it meaneth, what it worketh, what be the qualities and conditions of it, which be the causes, and which be the lets and hinderances; and also why, when, and wherefore we should repent. Therfore I haue in present intent to teach first what is repentãce. 1
Secondly, which be his qualities and effects. 2
Thirdly, when we should repent. 3
Fourthly, wherfore we should repent. 4
And last of all, what letteth vs from repentance: 5
which order and methode of teaching, although some may mislike (as in deede with me it is not ordinarie), yet considering the matter I haue in hand, I thinke it not inconuenient. But to the matter. Repentance 1 Quid
is an inward[1] sorrowing, and continuall mourning of the hart and conscience for sinne, ioyned[2] with faith, and both inward and outward amendment. Inward, I say, in chaunging the thoughts and affections of the hart: and outward in changing the wordes, and workes, from euill to good. This repentance no doubt was in Dauid, who when he was couertly reproued Excepla 1

prowed by the Prophet Nathan, and his sinnes laide before his etes, did not stubbornely defende them, and so iustle against GOD: nor yet secretly excuse them, and daube them ouer, but cried out in the bitternesse of his heart: I haue sinned; and therupon made the 51. Psalme. A Psalme indede ful of dolour and heauinesse: wherin the Prophet bewaileth his fals, lamenteth his sinnes, and praieth euen for a new hart and a newe spirite, newe thoughtes, newe affections, newe purposes of amendment of life. So that in Dauid we may see an inward sorrowing, a lasting griefe, (as the booke of Psalmes doth euery where declare, which laieth him out as it were in an Anatomie) yea, and great reformation: both in inward and outward sinnes. Here therefore beholde what is repentaunce.

Likewise Saint Peter through infirmitie hauing denied his Lorde and Maister Christ, and being pinched of his owne conscience, and wakened with the alarme of a poore Cockes crowing, went out of the Court of Pilate with an heauie heart weeping bitterly, and euer after stoutely professing Christ euen vnto the death. See then what is repentance. The Prophetes

Ioel. 2. 12

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in the olde testament, exhorting the rebellious Iewes vnto repentance, vse commonly an Hebreiue Uerbe, which signifieth, turne ye, or returne ye, and come backe againe, by the which Metaphor is ment, that like as a man that is straied farre out of his way, must turne quite backe againe the contrarie waie: So those that haue straied from the waies of godlinesse to the waie of sinne, must come backe againe as fast as euer they went forwarde, and altogither chaunge the course of their life; so that repentance is an earnest turning vnto God with all our hart, soule, and minde. Saint Iohn Baptist, and the Apostles in the newe Testament exhorting vnto repentance, vse a Greeke worde which signifieth a changing of the minde afterwarde, or after wit, so that those which through their follie, and want of former wit, haue slipped into the deepe pit and dangerous gulfe of sinne, when they come to themselues, and haue recouered their wits, will be wise afterwarde, and take heede they neuer come there againe, according to the Prouerbe, The burnt childe will take heed of the fire. By this time I hope you see what is repentance. It is not euery sorow, but

but sorowe for sinne, not for some sinne, but for all sinne, not for an howre, but for euer, not for a day, but continually, not for a weeke, but as long as we liue. Some think
1 euery sorowe is repentance, but so should worldlings repent. Some thinke euerie
2 little pant for sinne is repentance, so should
3 Pharaoh repent. Some thinke all weeping and lamenting for sinne is repentance: so should Esau, Iudas, & Caine repent. Some
4 thinke euery little humbling of our selues is repentance, but so should Achab repent.
5 Some thinke that good woordes and good purposes is repentance: but so should eue-
6 ry sicke man repent. Some thinke that reformation of woordes and deedes is repen-
7 tance: but so should ciuil men repent. Some thinke that crie God mercie is repentance, and so should euery foole repent. Yoush therefore how many are deceiued in repentance, but if you will see what it is in deede, looke backe to that which hath been saide afore. For he that will repent in good earnest, must not hang downe his head like a Bulrush for a day onely, and so haue done, nor crie from the teeth forward, Lord haue mercie on mee, and so away: but he must make a backe reckoning with diligent con-

sidera-

ſider all of his former life, as did the Prophet Dauid, Pſalme 119. verſe 59. I haue conſidered my waies, & turned my feete vnto thy teſtimonies. So muſt euery one that meaneth to repent, ſlinke aſide into ſome corner or out place, that there he may haue roome enough to eaſe his owne conſcience, and to make his hart ſmart for his ſinnes, by aggrauation thereof, and weighing all the circumſtances, as in the 9. of Daniel. The Church of God confeſſeth her ſinne, not lightly, but with wonderfull great exaggeration, and heaping of one thing to an other. So that it is not enough to ſay, I haue ſinned, but to ſay, I haue moſt traiterouſly ſinned. I haue moſt obſtinately, carelеſſly, and rebelliouſly ſinned. I haue monſtrouſly offended in ſuch a place, with ſuch a houſe, in ſuch company, in ſuch a day, in ſuch a corner in the darke. I committed adulterie cloſely, when I thought none had ſeene me: in ſuch a Chamber I defiled my neighbours wife: mine owne conſcience doth accuſe me of it. In ſuch and ſuch company I haue beene drunke, I haue ſpoken and railed againſt Gods word, I haue mocked the Preachers, I haue ſpoken no othes nor filthie

ſpeech

speech, and say O Lord, Lord, what an vgly monster, and wretched villaine am I? Here I stand before thy presence all naked, blind, wounded, poore, wretched and miserable, hauing deserued a thousand damnations, if thou shouldest enter into iudgement, & rie the law with me. Therefore I beseech thee shew pitie and compassion vpon me. Annoint my woundes with the oyle of mercie: Restore me my sight, cloath my nakednesse, enrich me that am poore, strengthen me that am weake: helpe me vp that am fallen: oh bid me not farewell. The infant ouercommeth his mother with crying, the child his father with weeping, and the seruant his master by entreatie, and will not thou be intreated O Lord? Thou I say, if euery man would speake in his conscience to God, and thus narrowly or more narrowly examine himselfe, vndoubtedly he were in the way of repentance.

But alas it is a woonder to see how the blind Buzzardes, and croked Cankerd creatures of this world doe alwaies from this ground, deceiuing themselues with the bare name and naked name of repentance. Many indeed can talke of it: but few walke in it. Many

speake

speake of it: but few feele it. Many describe it: but few know it. It is hid and vailed vp from the world, and reuealed onely to gods children. Many think they haue caught it, when they haue but the shadowe of it. It is so hie that few can reach it. It is so deepe that few can come to the bottome of it. It is so narrow that few can enter into it. So wide, that few can comprehend it. So slipperie that few can hold it. So secret, that few can finde it. Therefore my dere brethren, I beseech you, let vs pray vnto our God, that he would reueal vnto vs this misterie which is hid from the world, that we may truely see it, and know it, finde it, and feele it, to our endlesse comfort, through Christ Iesus; which grace he graunt vs. Amen.

But now to the second point concerning the qualities and fruites of Repentance. One speciall qualitie of Repentance, is alwaies to bring with it remission of sinnes: for where true Repentance goeth before, there remission of sinnes must needes follow after, not that repentance deserueth Remission of sinne, but because where God worketh repentance, there he pardoneth sin because of his promise. As in Ezechiel 8. 17. When the wicked turneth away from

his wickednes, that he hath cõmitted, & doth that which is lawfull & right, he shal saue his soule aliue. And againe, Esa. 55. 7. Let the wicked forsake his waies, and the vnrighteous his owne imaginations, & returne vnto the Lord, & he will haue mercy vpon him. So here we see, to whom forgiuenes of sinnes, and the mercy of God belongeth: namely, to the penitent sinners, to those that leaue sinne, and imbrace godlines: to those that forsake their owne waies and imaginations, and turn vnto the Lord. And as for such as walke on, in their owne waies, and folow the delights of sin, without any sorow or purpose to leaue thē, they haue nothing to do with the mercy of God, & though Iesus Christ had suffred an hundreth deaths (which could not be) yet shall not vnpenitent sinners haue remission of his sinnes by his death, nor any other benefits of his passion, for they belong onely to his Church and chosen people here vpon the earth. Therfore that is not of the church, & is not graffed into Christ by faith, & that is not a mēber of his mistical body, can enioy nothing by Christs death. If any man abide not in me, he is cast forth as a branch, & withereth, & men gather them

Esa. 55. 7.

and

and cast them into the fire, & they burne Ioh. 15.6. We reade in the 29. of Deuteronom. howe God barreth all stubborne sinners from his mercy, and doth most terribly shoote out against them. He that heareth the woordes of this curse, and blesseth himselfe in hart, saieng: I shall haue peace although I walke accoording to the stubbornnes of mine owne heart, thus adding drunkennes to thirst, the Lord will not be merciful vnto him, but the the wrath of the lord, & his iealousie shall smoak against that man, & euery curse that is writte in the book shall light vppon him. So that God saith plainly, he hath no mercy for such as walke in the vain delights of sin, & in the stubbornnes of their own hart: adding drunkennes to thirst: that is, ioining one horrible sin to another, yet for all this it is a wonder to see howe the blind worms of the earth deceiue themselues. For they think whatsoeuer they say, whatsoeuer they do, be it good be it euil, whether they repēt, or not repent, yet they shall be saued by Christes death, as though they would make it a baude to their sinnes and so worke that villanie against Christ. I hope to be saued by Christes death, as well as the best of them al, saith som. But where

is thy repentance thou miserable wretch: Woest thou think that Gods mercy is common to all: And Christs death a bande for our sins: no, no, when it commeth to the vpshot, thou shalt stop short. For it will proue farre otherwise: For thou shalt find Gods mercie turned into iustice: & Christs death into wormeswode, because thou hatedst knowledge, and choosedst not the feare of the Lord. Thus you see my deere brethren, that repentance must needes go before forgiuenesse of sinnes, and where it leadeth not the way, there the gates of gods mercy are shut vp, and this is the first qualitie of repentance. It hath also an other condition, and that is to alter and change men from that they were before, not in the substance and proportion of the bodie, but in the qualities and conditions of the mind. For whosoeuer hath truely repented, you shall by and by see a most marueilous and wonderfull change in him, so that he will not doe as he hath done, nor speak as he hath spoken, nor companie as he hath companied, nor play the good fellow (as they terme it) as he was wont to do: nor run to the same excesse of riot he was wont. And this is it that amazeth the world, and causeth them to wiffle and

some at the mouth like wild boares, and to speak euill of them that turned vnto God: for the world loueth his owne, and can not abide that God should plucke one feather from his wings. But Repentance doth violently pull men out of the clawes of Sathan, & change them from the conditions of the world: for it maketh of proud, humble: of hartfull, harmelesse: of cruell, meeke: of Wolues, Lambes: of Lions, Sheepe: of adulterers, chast liuers: of drunkards, sober men: of swearers, reuerent speakers: of haters, louers: of despisers, imbracers: of scoffers, followers: of earthly, heauenly: of Diuels, Saints. All this worketh Repentance. Paule trauailed towards *Damascus*, a wolfe, a persecutor, a bloodsucker, an hater, a despiser, but ere he came there, he was quite changed, and clean of an other mind; so mighty was he that met him by the way. When Jesus Christ sent downe the holy Ghost vpon his Disciples, according to his promise, there were some scoffers at *Ierusalem*, which mocked and said, They are full of new wine. But the same men cried out by and by after, Men and brethren what shall we do to be saued?

Here was a most wonderfull and sodain

change. See then the force of Repentance, when God striketh it into the hart of man, and driueth the naile to the head as they say it effecteth that which all the wisdome and policie of man is not able to bring to passe, and when they haue prolled hither, and thither, and laid their heads togither, and sought al the corners of their wits, yet can they not tell which way to turn their hand, or where to begin to change the hart of a man, and to conuert him to God. Therefore repentance is stronger than all the whole world, & worketh that which all men with their naturall wits, fine heads, and deepe deuises cannot compasse, for the conuersion of a sinner, is a worke supernaturall. Here then we haue a glasse to beholde our selues in, whether euer we haue repented, or no. For if we finde not this change and alteration in vs, we haue not repented, and is consequently remaine vnder damnation. Therefore let euery man looke vnto himself, for marke how much he is changed and altered from his former euill waies, so much hath he repented. And he that is the same man he was, three, foure, eight, nay, thirtie yeeres ago: surely, surely, he hath not repented, and therefore abideth in damnation. I

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maruaile then how those men which neuer felt any change or alteration wrought in them, nay, whose consciences tel them, that they are not chãged ne know what it meaneth, can haue any hope of saluation: vnles peraduenture they beleeue not this doctrin or thinke it to be false. I wil send ouer these men to such as haue beene in the like case they now are; & yet thought they might do wel enough for al that, although both blind in iudgement, and corrupt in conuersation. I haue knowne, and do know men, which before their conuersion and inward change, were counted as honest men as euer brake bread, and as substantial men as they could be, as true dealers, vpright liuers, and good house-keepers as any of their neighbours: yea, and they had the same opinion of themselues to. And yet notwithstanding when they haue felt Repentaunce working this change and alteration in them, through the power of the spirit at the preaching of the word, and when they haue had new harts giuen them to discern better, and new eies to see better, as men come out of a dampe, haue wondred and maruailed at the palpable and grosse darknes they were in before, and haue burst forth into these words, that

they would not be in the same case they were afore, no not for all the worlds goods, for if they should haue died in that case, they were sure they should haue bene damned. But I pray you what case were they in before, were they not good honest men & well accounted of, and honest liuers, & wel taken where soeuer they came: Surely they were so taken in the world, but now they thinke far otherwise of themselues, their eyes being opened, and their iudgements enlightned, for now they see that they saw not before, now they vnderstand that God condemneth many whom the world iustifieth. He thinketh this example should make ciuill and worldly men see and suspect themselues, and know their owne misery before God. For these men were as good as they, before their conuersion, and yet afterward confessed that they were plunged to the bottom of hell, & drowned in the depth of damnation. He that hath eares to heare, let him heare, & he that hath eies to see, let him see: for if men will still flatter themselues for all this, that they shal be saued without feeling any change or works of repentance, it will cost them full deare in the end. For Christs words will proue true, that whosoeuer repenteth

penteth not, shal be damned, that is, whosoeuer doth not feele in himselfe what is Repentance, and find in himselfe the qualities thereof shalbe condemned. For where Repentance is, there be the qualities of Repentance, and where the qualities be absent, there is no true repentance. So that where Christ saith: Except ye repent, ye shal all perish: it is all one as if he had said, except ye know the truth of repentance, except ye can proue vnto your consciences the forgiuenes of your sinnes, except you feele a change and alteration in the bottom of your hart, of all your former lewd waies & misdemeanor you shall surely perish & be damned. But let vs yet a litle farther search out the qualities of Repentance: The Apostle in the seuenth Chapter of the second epistle to the *Corinthians*, setteth downe seuen notable qualities and effects of Repentance. The first of them he nameth care. For behold saith he, this thing that you haue bene godly sory, what care it hath wrought in you, that is an earnest study and as it were a taking thought to please God. For where true repentance hath once wrought, there foloweth great care afterward. Care I say, to line in the obedience of GOD. Care to

2 Cor. 7. qualit.

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kéepe a good conscience. Care to reform our Houshold. Care to instruct Wiues, Childrẽ and seruants in the knowledge of God. Care to pray with them morning and euening: and generally, care to performe all duties belonging vnto God, so that repentance is not a careleſſe, but a carefull thing. Let not men thinke therfore that although they welter in the careleſneſſe of the flesh, & sléepe in security all the daies of their life, yet their repentance is good enough, yea, and though they spend whole daies, nights, moneths, and yéeres in vanities, plaies and pastimes, in idleneſſe, fond delights: pleasure and voluptuouſneſſe, in negligence of all dueties, forgetfulneſſe of God, and contempt of all good things: yet for all this they repent for their sinnes, and hope to be saued as well as any other. But alas how cã these things stand togither, to repent for sinne, and to delight in sinne: to hate sinne, & loue sinne: to flie from sinne, and to follow after sinne. But these mẽ I perceiue would faine make S. Paul a lier, for he saith a mã hath neuer repented, except he be carefull afterward to please God, they say they do repent & haue repented, although they liue neuer so wretchedly, and carelesly. But when all licen-

licencious and lewde liuers, filthy whoremongers, beastly bellygods, & careleſſe caitiffes, come to the kingdome of God, & are ſaued, then ſhall theſe men alſo come with them to be ſaued by careleſſe repentance.

The next qualitie and effecte of Repentance, is named cléering of our ſelues, that is diſcharging of our ſelues, when ſin doth accuſe vs and lay things to our charge: for when ſinne and Sathan, doth terrifie the conſcience of the poore penitent Sinner, by and by he flieth vnto God, & aſketh forgiueneſſe through Jeſus Chriſt, and ſo cléereth himſelfe, and maketh his Apologie againſt ſin and Sathan, like as a man that is preſented into the Court, vppon ſuſpicion of whoredom, or any other notorious crime, muſt cléere himſelf by witnes of that which is laid to his charge. So the conſcience that is cited by Sathan before the iuſtice and iudgement ſeat of God, cleareth it ſelfe by Repentance, and aſketh forgiueneſſe thorow Jeſus Chriſt. So that here wee may ſée a wonderfull fruite of a penitent conſcience, it cannot abide the accuſation of ſin. It cannot be quiet till it be reconciled vnto God: and ſo haue peace with it ſelfe: For this is to be noted in the godly man, that when

when he hath committed any sinne, and his conscience telleth him of it, by and by he feeleth lead within him, and is all heauie, and cannot sleepe quietly, til he haue gotten into some corner, where he may mourne and lament to the full, and confesse and lay open himselfe vnto God, & so cleere himselfe thorowe Iesus Christ, his conscience bearing him witnes that his sin is forgiuen. Where as contrariwise the vngodly man, when his conscience accuseth him of sinne, he dispatcheth away all such thoughts, and treadeth them vnder foote, and by and by calleth for a paire of cards or tables, and some merrie companion to driue away the time, and to put out al such thoughts out of his head, and so indeed he increaseth them more and more and causeth them to rankle inwardly.

3. Q. The third qualitie is called indignation, that is, a mortall and deadly hatred against sin: as when a man doth shudder and shake & as it were grind his teeth at the remembrance of his sins: for this is alwaies in the penitent person to loth and abhorre all sin from his hart, both his owne sinnes and the sinnes of other, and to hate it as the Diuell himselfe, which is the author of it, and to flie from it, as from the very rat throte

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and hangman of his soul, and to know it to be the only thing that blindeth, that hardeneth, that seperateth from God, and procureth all plagues and diseases both of bodie and soule against vs. Therefore he spitteth at it in defiance, and disdaineth it, and stoppeth his nose at the stinke of it, whersoeuer he smelleth it.

The fourth thing is feare, which is a certaine awe of God, when a man is afraid to displease him. For the penitent person feareth alway, and being privy to his own infirmitie and weaknes (when God neuer so little withdraweth his grace, and leaueth him alone) worketh his saluation with fear and trembling. He will not presume vpon former grace to commit any sin, or flatter himselfe in the mercie of God, and in the things that he hath alreadie talked of God, to yeelde to some little sinne, thinking he may do that, and be the childe of God well ynough, bicause some of gods children haue fallen into greater: but rather he trembleth at the least motion of sinne, and is afraid of the temptations which Satan trumpeth in his way, and is afraide when the temptations of sinne are vpon him, to satisfie the hunger of sinne, but rather he fighteth against 4. 7.

against sin, when sin fighteth against him, and presenteth the feare of God before his eies (as godly Ioseph in the assault of Putiphars wife) to be as it were a tower of defence and welspring of life, to auoide the snares of death.

The fift thing is desire, that is a hungering and thirsting after righteousnes. For the penitent man is rauished with desire of good things: hee desireth to be euerie daie better than other: he desireth to leaue euery day some sin: he desireth to pray: he desireth new knowledge, and new vnderstanding of heauenly thinges. He desireth to heare Sermons, and will straine himselfe to heare them. He desireth the company of the godly, he thinketh himselfe in Heauen, when he is amongst them. He desireth the saluation of his very enimies, and praieth for them. All these and many other such like desires are in the penitent man.

The sixt quality is zeale, which consisteth in the earnest imbracing of vertue, and hatred of vice, so that the penitent person, is zealous in euery good thing. Zealous of Gods glory in all places, in all companies, and amongst all persons. He cannot abide that Gods honour should bee impeached, or his

his name blasphemed, or his glory trampled vnder foot by wicked men, but he will open his mouth to reprooue the wicked, and stand stoutly in the defence of Gods glorie. He is not like the Atheists, & Dissemblers, which are alwaies as is the company, that is, godly amongst the godly: a protestant amongst protestants: wicked amongst the wicked: a Papist amongst Papistes: a Worlding amongst Worldlings: and a Swearer amongst Swearers: a weathercocke that turneth with euery winde. The penitent man I say, is not of this stampe, but he is constant and zealous in all good things. He is zealous both against the pleasures and profits of sinne, though he might win a whole world, or pleasure himselfe neuer so much, by committing a sinne against God, yet will he refuse it, for he hath learned from Christs mouth, that it shall not profite a man to win the whole world, and to lose his owne soule.

The last thing is Reuenge, that is, the penitent person is so offended with the sin he hath cõmitted, that he will be reuenged of himselfe for it. As for example, if he haue offended in Glutony, he wil reuenge himselfe by fasting two or three daies after: If he

he haue offended in whoredome, he will be reuenged of his lustes, by hating & bridling them euer after: If he haue offended in couetous catching and polling of other mens goods, he will be reuenged on himself by restitution, as was godly and penitent Zacheus, and this indeed is a speciall fruit of Repentaunce, to reforme our selues in those things wherein we haue most offended. Now then yee see (my deere brethren) what lieth in the belly of Repentance, and which bee his inwardes; so that wee must needes now come to the vnlacing and vnbowelling of Christs words. Except ye repent (saith he) ye shall all perish: that is, except ye haue this forenamed cure, you shall all be damned: Except you haue this clearing of your selues, you shal be damned, except you haue this indignation: you shal all be damned: Except you haue this feare you shall be damned: Except you haue this desire, you shall all be damned: Except you haue this zeale, you shal all be damned: Except you haue this reuenge, you shall all be damned. For our Sauiour Christ doth not speake of the bare name of Repentance, but of Repentance with all his furniture, and appurtenances: so that whosoeuer hath

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[illegible] Repentance with all his qualities and effects, or at the least some measure of them, he hath no repentance in deede, and therefore shall be damned, for except ye repent, ye shall all perish. But one thinketh that I heare some men say: Here is nothing but damnation, damnation: You preach nothing but the Lawe: Let us heare of the Gospell. Brethren, when I protest unto you, that I speake of love, whatsoever I speake. I desire the salvation of you all: If I could win but two in all this congregation, I would count my selfe happy, and thinke that God had greatly blessed my labours. And undoubtedly, if I knew any nearer way to bring you unto GOD, than by preaching the Lawe, to make you know your selves: Surely, surely I would use it. Or if I could be perswaded that the preaching of the Gospell, and mercy would doe you more good: you should heare of nothing but Gospell, Gospell, Mercy, mercy: But alas, I see that every careless and ignorant man passeth upon Gods mercy, I see that every filthy liver, and malicious blasphemer, abuseth Gods mercy, in applying it to himselfe without repentance, so that

they would make Gods mercy a cloake for their sinnes: I se that euery man would faine be flattered in sinne, and heare of it no more, but haue the Gospell preached, which in deede belongeth not vnto them, continuing in their stubbornnesse, but vnely to the penitent sinner, which forsaketh himselfe and groneth, and panteth vnder the burden of his sin. Therefore when I se you humbled with the conscience of your sinnes, and grone and pant vnder the burden of them: when I se your faces blubbered with weeping, and your harts mollified, and sorrowing with care, then wil I comfort you, and cease to preach the lawe. But I pray you will you steale, murther, and commit adulterie, and yet heare of mercie? Will ye mock, swear, blaspheme, and raile, and yet heare of mercie? Will you serue sinne, hate vertue, and follow your owne lusts, and yet heare of mercy? Would you haue Plaisters before you haue woundes? Would you haue Physicke before you be sicke? Would you be let blood before you haue needes? Would you not account him a foolish physition that wil minister Physicke to a whole man? Would you not thinke him

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an vnskilfull Chirurgion, that will applie a gentle Salue to an olde festered sore, and not rather cornie it? Then knowe you thy brethren, that bicause you are full of grosse humors, you must haue strong purgations, bicause you are full of old festered wounds, you must haue corrasiue salues, for that is the best for you, and the speediest way to recouer your health: and forasmuch as you be rough horses, you must haue a rough Rider: and harde knobby Timber must haue hard Wedges, and hard strokes with a beetle. We preach the Lawe to driue you to Christ: we preach iudgement to make you seek mercy: we preach damnation to bring you to saluation. But to preach mercy and forgiuenes before men see their sinnes, or knowe their miseries by the preaching of the Lawe, is to preach the Gospell vnprofitably. For he that is ignorant of the Law, knoweth not what miserie is in himselfe: nor what mercy is in God.

What father is there, who if his childe should plaie the stubborne boy, and disobey him in euery thing he commanded, would strake his head, and say he were a good boy and not rather sauerely correct him, and

whippes him with a rodde? What maister will commende his seruant for doing what he list, and not what he commandeth him? euen so wee may not disobey, and doe euill, and looke to be flattered too, and not rather chidden. Let vs knowe then, that although God vse searing, launcing, corzing, & searching of the bones, and other violent remedies, yet in the meane while hee procureth our healthy by them. And let vs further vnderstand, that for as much as there is none other meanes to draw vs to saluation, but by cleansing of all our vices, and the same cleansing cannot be done but by violence, when we be warned by the doctrine of the Law so as our owne conscience accuse vs, although wee like well to bee nowe and then flattered and soothed, yet let vs looke to bee spoken vnto earnestly, to haue our faults told vs, and to be made ashamed of them, & to haue our vnhonestie discouered and not desire to be pleased. For it were the next way to make vs rot in our owne filthinesse, if we should hold it so in secret: and it would cost vs dear y^ setting on, if we should be so flattered by men, & in the meane season the heauenly iudge shall thunder down

vpon

vpon vs.

Therfore when any man commeth to a Sermon, let him first and formost make his reckoning to be rebuked, as meete is, and let him vnderstand, that it is for his profit, that he is not soothed. And if he haue itching eares, let him lay them away from him, assuring himself that els he is foreclosed, so as he shal neuer receiue the doctrin to his profite and instruction. And let him be content to haue his sores rubbed and bewraied, that he may be brought to that, which is for his welfare. If a man please a sicke body, what shal become of him, shal he giue him drink euery minute of an houre? shall he giue him wine, whereas he should giue him water? shall he giue him Sallets? It were the next way to poison him. To be short, it is certaine that a man doth alwaies seeke his owne death, when he would haue men to sooth him. But now which is better, either that he which hath the ordering of a sicke man, should yeeld to all his desires, or that he should bridle him, notwithstanding that he chafe and gnash his teeth, because he may not haue his owne will in his desires? You see therefore how dangerous a thing

it is to flatter & raise vp men with the preaching of mercy, before they haue beene cast downe with the sense of gods iudgements. Cease therefore to open your mouthes to make hue and crie ouer the Country, saying: They preach nothing but the Law, the Law, Damnation, Damnation, vnlesse ye will take in Christ to, and make him one of the number, and accuse him of want of wisdome: Because he preacheth and crieth out that whosoeuer repenteth not shall be condemned. For my part, I preach the Gospell to whom the Gospell belongeth, and the Law to whom the Law belongeth. I preach mercy to whom mercy belongeth, & iudgement to whom iudgement appertaineth. And therefore hold your peace and be content to be ruled by the wisedom of God. But now let vs proceed to the third general point, which is the time when we should repent.

The holy Ghost in the Scriptures pointeth vs to the present time, & exhorteth vs to make that the time of our repentaunce. Ioel. 2.21. Therefore, also now the Lord saith, turne you vnto me with al your hart, with fasting with weeping and with mourning.

ning. Likewise in the 3. chapter to the Hebrewes: Exhort one another while it is called to day, least any of you be hardened through the deceitfulnesse of sinne. And in the same chapter. To day if ye will heare his voice, harden not your hartes as in the provocation: So that now, euen now, euen now, is the time of our repentance. Now whilst he calleth, now whilst he speaketh, now whilest he knocketh, let vs now therefore heare: let vs now therefore obey: let vs now therefore redéeme this day: this present Wednesday, which hath so reflowed so many daies, which haue so long hardned our hartes, which haue let so many good things run out, and spill besides: let vs take vp this day, and make it the day of our repentance. Although we could neuer be moued with any Sermon hitherto, yet let vs now be moued once at last: Let vs now say, this shall be my day of repentance, I will deferre it no longer, but now will I turne vnto my God, and forsake all my former wicked waies, and mine olvne imaginations: I will now change the course of my life, and begin all new againe. I will be acquainted with Gods word, and take

counsel there how to do, and how to behaue
my selfe in every action. I will not only re-
forme my selfe, but also my whole household,
wife, children, and seruants, according vnto
the lawe. Thus my deere brethren, I be-
seech you, purpose in your harts without
any further delay, and be not like to Epi-
cures and fleshe-gracers, which say, youth
will be youthfull, and youth will haue a
course, and what should we make it so holy
when we are young: tush there needes but
a sigh an hour before death, let vs be merry
now, we shall neuer be younger, we will re-
pent when we are olde. As though poore
soules, they had repentance in their fiuers
and at their commaundement, and that they
could repent whē they list. No, no, the fe-
lowes shall pay for their presumption. For
God will giue them ouer to hardnesse of
hart, and impenitencie, bicause they take
so much vpon them, and make so long de-
laies, that in the meane season they might
enioy the profits & pleasures of sin. There-
fore good brethren let vs not put it off from
daie to daie, but let vs now seeke the Lord
whilest he may be found, and call vpon him
whilest he is nere: let vs take time whyle

time

time is, for time & tide tarieth for no man. Let vs know this to be the time of our visitation. Our Sauior Christ wept ouer Hierusalem, because they knew not the time of their visitation. He reproueth the Iewes because they could discerne the face of the skie, but could not discerne the signes of the times. And surely in the ende it will turn to our destruction, if we will not know this to be the day of mercy, ỳ time of grace wherein God stretcheth forth his hand vnto vs, and wisedom crieth out in the stræts. Therefore now whilest we haue the light let vs walke as Children of the light: the night commeth when no man can worke. It shall be to late to call for mercy after this life, when the gates of mercy are shut vp, and repentance will be to late. Oh deare Christians, let vs remember the fiue foolish Virgins, which because they foreslowed the time, had heauẽ gates barred vp against them. Let vs also remember the fearful and dolefull example of the rich glutton, which being in hell torments, yelled and yelped for the least ease & helpe that might be, and could not haue it. An hũdred thousand times therefore better it is for vs to leaue our sin

now

now to mourne for them, now and now to repent, then hereafter, alas, when it will be too late. Better now a great deale to take some paines, to straine our selues to leaue our sinnes, & to make our hart smart for them, then to be cõdemned for euer, and to crie in the bottome of Hell: Wee haue wearied our selues in the way of wickednes and destruction, and we haue gone thorow dangerous waies: but we haue not knowen the way of the Lord. What hath pride profited vs? Or what profit hath the pomp of riches brought vs? All those things are passed away like a shadowe, and as a post that passeth by. We haue set our selues against the children of God, we haue had them in derisiõ, and in a parable of reproch, we fooles thought their life madnesse, and their end without dishonour, but loe they are counted amongst the children of God, & their portion is among the Saints. Therefore let vs know the time of our calling, and let vs not be worse then the foules of the aire: The Turtle, the Crane, and the Swallow, obserue the times of their comming. The husbandman taketh his times. The mariner watcheth his tides. Therefore,

fore, let vs also take the time and turne vnto the Lord, whilest it is said to day, which grace God grant vs.

Nowe let vs returne vnto the fourth point concerning the causes, which may moue vs vnto repentance. Herein I haue obserued nine speciall things. First, the great mercy of GOD, leadeth vs vnto repentance, as Rom. 2. The bountifulnesse of God, leadeth vs vnto repentance, saieth the Apostle. God doth coutinually followe vs, with his mercies and benefits, both concerning our soules and bodies, we haue no good thing, which we haue not receiued at his hands, we hold all that we haue of him and to him are we beholding for all: great is his mercie towardes our bodies, but much greater towardes our soules, and euery mercie and benefite, either towarde soule, or body, calleth vs to repentance. He giueth vs meate, drinke, and clothing, these call vs to repentance: he keepeth vs at his owne costs and charges here belowe, this calleth vs to repentance: the Sunne the Moone and the Starres, call vs to Repentance. The Birdes of the aire, the Fishes of the Sea, and the fruits of the earth

crie

crie out vpon vs both loude and shrill: Repent, repent. All Creatures moue vs to repentance. Our creation calleth, our redemption crieth, our Sanctification knocketh, and our Election moueth to repentance. What coulde God doe more for his Vineyard that he hath not done. Therfore let vs repent.

2. For Repent

Secondly, the iudgements of GOD moue vs vnto repentance, for all the thunderbolts, Plagues, and Punishments, which God hath throwne downe vpon obstinate sinners, from the beginning of the world, are so many warning peeces vnto vs to awake vs out of the dead sleepe of sin, & to pricke vs to repentance. As in the first, Cor. 10. When the apostle had cited diuers great iudgements of GOD, against the old Israelites for diuers sinnes, he concludeth: Now al these things came vnto them for examples, & were written to admonish vs, vpon whom the ends of the worlde are come. So that all the Iudgementes we read of in the Scriptures, are so many admonitions, and as it were Cart Ropes to draw vs to Repentance. All the Iudgements we read of, heard of, doe see, and

heare

hear of euery day, knock with main strokes beate downe right vppon our consciences to Repentance. The vgly mōsters, strange births, firy constellations, vnknowen Cometes, sodain death, maruailous droughes, vnwonted snowes, horrible inundations, forraine wonders, straunge apparitions, threatning of heauen aboue, with streming and shooting fire, trembling of the earth vnder our feet, and our houses ouer our heads as of late day: What are all these, but as it were great Cranes with beames, and Cable Ropes, to drawe vs vp to the Lord by repentance.

Thirdly, the word of God haleth vs to Repentance; For, as God in olde time sent his prophets both early and late, to call the rebellious Iewes to repentance: so he sendeth abroad his preachers, and messengers in these daies, to sound vp ẏ trumpet of his word, and to ring the sweet bel of Aaron amongst them, to awake them to repentãce, but alas, how lightly are they regarded? Who heareth their voice? But surely this is the last remedy that god hath appointed, and if this will not moue vnto repentance, if this will not cure vs, there is no altogether

ther vncurable.

4 Fourthly, the infinite number of sinnes wee haue committed, ought to be so manie spurres in our sides, to pricke vs to repentance. It is sufficient, saith Saint Peter, that we haue spent the time past of our life after the lusts of the Gentiles, walking in Wantonnes, Lusts, Drunkennesse, Gluttony, Drinkings: and al abhominable Idolatries. Therefore, it is time nowe to Repent, Oh that men woulde looke backe to themselues, as they were fortie, thirtie, twentie, or ten yeares agoe. Oh that they woulde call to minde, their open and secret sin, and me thinketh it shoulde make their hart bleed within their belly, to think vpon them. Oh that they woulde consider howe much time they haue misspent, and howe many good things they haue neglected, and altogither omitted.

5 Fifthly the shortnesse of our life, calleth earnestly vpon vs to repent. The time of our life is sixtie yeares and ten, and if they be of strength eighty yeares, yet the strength is but labour and sorrowe, so is it cutte off quickely, and we flie away, saith the Prophet Dauid, we haue spent our yeares as a

thought.

thought. Therefore he addeth: Teach vs to number our daies, that we may apply our harts vnto wisdome. Our life for the shortnesse, and inconstancie of it in the Scriptures, is compared to grasse, to a vapour, to smoke, to a Weauers shuttle which glideth away swiftly. Euen so the daies of man passe awaie, no man knoweth how. Man is of a short continuance, saith Iob, & full of trouble. Experience teacheth, that to day a man, to morrowe none. Hence away we must all, here is no abiding place for vs, how soone we know not. Therefore let vs repent.

Sixthly, the small number of those which shall be saued ought to thrust vs forward to repentance. Striue to enter in at the narrowe gate: For many I say vnto you will seeke to enter in, and shall not be able saith Christ, Luk. 13. 24. And in another place he saith, The gate is straight, and the way narrow that leadeth vnto life, & few there be that finde it. If men would consider of this, it would make them looke better about them, and erie with themselues whether they be of that small number or no.

Seventhly, death threatneth vs, who is

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very terrible to the flesh, & the remembrance of it very bitter to a man that is souled and soked in the pleasures of this world. It flattereth no man, it regardeth not persons, it weighethnot friendshipe, it careth not for rewards, it is very grym, vgly, and cruell, and killeth downe right where it hitteth. Therefore let vs repent.

8 Eighthly, the day of iudgement and second appearing of the Sonne of Man, will come as a Theefe in the night, in the which the heauens shall passe a way with a noise, and the Elements shall melt with heate, and the Earth with workes that are therein, shall be burnt vp: seeing therfore that all these things must be dissolued, what maner of persons ought ye to be in holy conuersation and godlinesse, saith S. Peter 2.3. The Lord Iesus shall be in himselfe from heauen, with his mightie Angels in flaming fire, rendring vengeance vnto them that know not God, and obey not vnto the Gospell of our Lord Iesus Christ saith the Apostle, 2. Thes. 1. I saw saith S. Iohn, Apoc. 20. a great white Throne, and one that sate on it, from whose face fled away, both the earth and the heauen, and

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their place was no more foũd. And I sawe the dead, both great and small stand before God: and the bookes were opened, and another booke was opened, which is the booke of life, & the dead were iudged of those thinges, which were written in the bookes according to their workes. And the Sea gaue vp hir dead, which were in hir, and Death and Hel deliuered vp the dead which were in them: & they were iudged euery man, according to his woorkes. In these places we sée, both the sodaineneſſe, the fearefulneſſe, and glory of Christs comming. For hée shall not come poorely, and contemptuously, as in the first visitation, but he shall come very Princely, royally, and triumphantly to the great terrour of all his enimies, when a consuming fire shall goe before him, and ten thousand thousandes of Angels waite vpon him: at whose come the kinges of the earth, and the great men, and the rich men, and the chiefe captaines, and the mightie men, and euery bondman, and euery frée man, shall hide themselues in dennes, and amongest the Rockes of the mountaines, and say to the rockes and mountaines, fall on vs, and hide

vs from the presence of him, that sitteth on the throne, & from the wrath of the Lambe, for the great day of his wrath is come, and who can stand? Apoc. 6. Therefore let vs repent.

9. 7 The last thing is hell torments, than the which nothing is more intollerable. Therfore saith Christ. Marke 9. If thine hand cause thee to offend, cut it off. It is better for thee to enter into life maymed, than hauing two hands, to goe into hell, into the fire that neuer shall bee quenched. Where the worme dieth not, and the fire neuer goeth out. The Scripture speaketh terrible to our senses, concerning the estate of the damned persons, calling it hell fire, damnation, the lake that burneth with fire and brimstone for euer. In the thirty chapter of the prophesie of Esay, it is called Topheth, and it is euen prepared of old, it is euen prepared for the king: he hath made it deepe and large, the burning thereof is fire and much wood, the breath of the Lord like a riuer of brimstone doeth kindle it: These speeches are terrible to our senses, and may maruellously amaze vs. But if I had the tonge of an hundred men, nay of

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an hundred Angels, yet were I not able to vtter them as some shal one day feele them, much lesse were you able to conceiue them. If all the tortures and cruell torments that can be deuised by the wit of man, were executed vpõ some one, yet were it nothing to this. We poore wretches thinke there is no paine to a collicke, or a cruell ague. But if all collickes, agues, and all other straunge diseases could possibly light vpon one man, it were but a flea-biting to that which is to come. The paine is endlesse, easelesse, and remedilesse. The daies of their hellish torments shall neuer weare out, nor their yeares come to an end, the longer they continue, the lesse hope haue they. When as many yeares are expired, as there be men in the world, and starres in the heauens: when as many thousand yeares are ended, as there be Stones and Sand by the Sea shore: yet still there be x. hundred thousand times so many mo to come. Those that wil not now be moued in hearing, shal then be crushed to pieces in feeling. All drunkards, swearers, whoremongers, vsurers, extortioners, liers, mockers, contemners, secure persons, iolly fellowes, roisting ruf-

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tians, lustie blouds, the braue lads of this world, and all other vnbeléeuers, shall one day be apprehended, and arraigned before the Barre of Gods tribunall seate, where the maiestie of God shal stand aboue them, with a naked sword of vengeance, and a scepter of iustice. The Diuell that old Sathanas shall stand on the one side to accuse them, and their owne conscience of the other side to condemne them, and the gasping gulfe of Hell vnderneath them readie to swallow them vp for euermore. Then shall the dreadfull sentence of eternall woe and damnation procéede against them. Goe ye cursed into hell fire, &c. There they shall drinke as a iust recompence of their iniquitie, the bitter cup of Gods eternall wrath and indignation, in the kingdome of darknes, and in the fearefull presence of Sathan, and all the cursed enemies of Gods grace, where the dolefull drumme of Gods anger shal euer sound through their eares, where shall be wéeping and gnashing of téeth, where shall be confusion, woe, and endlesse lamentation. Their gripes shall be great, their grones so déepe, and their garboiles so vntollerable, that they shall grin like a dog

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in their infernall conuulsions, & with howling and yelling crie out: Wo, and alas that euer I was borne: Oh that I had neuer bene borne, or that my mother had born me a toad. For then my condition should haue bene better than it is. Cursed was the time I was begot in, the houre I was conceiued in, and the day that I sucked my mothers paps. Cursed I was alwaies, cursed I am, & cursed I shall be for euermore. Woe, wo, how great is my torment, whose hart doth not melt, whose eares doe not glow, whose haires doth not stand vpõ his head to heare these things. Therefore deare brethren let vs repent. If the mercy of God cannot allure vs, let his iudgements scarre vs. If his iudgements cannot scarre vs, let his word moue vs. If his word cannot moue vs, let our sinnes amaze vs. If our sinnes can not amaze vs, let the shortnes of our life dampe vs. If the shortnes of our life cannot dampe vs, let the small number of those that shalbe saued, affray vs. If that cannot affray vs, let death terrifie vs. If death cannot terrifie vs, let the day of iudgement shake vs: If that cannot shake vs, yet let hell torments shudder vs, and rent vs in pieces. For verily

my brethren, if none of all these can preuaile, if we will not for all this repent, but be obstinate, then we shall all perish and be damned according to Christs words. Now let vs procéede to speake of those things which let and hinder vs from repentance, which in déede although they be in number infinite, yet at this time I wil lay forth seuen speciall lets, and hinderances, vnto repentance.

5 The first is vnbeléefe, that is, when men will not beléeue those things that are spoken and prowed vnto them out of the word of God. This is it that vomiteth vp all good things and poisoneth the very intrals of a man, and kéepeth all good graces from vs. As appéereth Math. 13.58. Hee did not many great workes there, for their vnbeliefs sake. And in the 4. to the Hebrewes it is said. Vnto vs was the Gospell preached, as also vnto them, but the woord that they heard, profited not them, bicause it was not mixed with faith, in those that heard it. So that here we may see, although we heare neuer so much, yet if we bring not faith with vs, we shall neuer profit vnto repentance. For vnbeliefe taketh

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vp our harts for Satan, and refuseth all the wholesome doctrine of saluation, and doth so harden them in the waies of sinne, that in the end they become past feeling, and can not be touched one whit: either with the iudgements or mercies of God: but count the one as blasts of wind, and make the other a couert for their filthines. You shall note some men, who when they haue heard their sins straightly ripped vp by the word of God, and their iust damnation proued by the same, without spéedy & earnest repentance, will breake out into these words of vnbeléefe. If it be as he saith, God helpe vs, I hope it is not so, I trust I shall do well enough for all this, as long as I haue a good faith in God, and doe no body no harme. Shall I leaue my pleasures and my profits for their sayings? What? doe they thinke none shall be saued, but such as reade the Scriptures, and heare sermons: God forbid but those which do not go to heare sermons, should be saued as wel as they: Why may not one serue God as well at home in his house, hauing good bookes, and good praiers, as by comming to the Church to heare sermons and seruice? Alas, these

men ſtand to much in their owne light, and bewraye what folly and ignorance is in them. For do they think to be ſaued by any other meanes then God hath appointed: or when God hath auouched any thing in his word, will they except againſt it, & ſo make God a lier? when God hath once ſet downe a thing, & proued it to their faces, will they yet replie? When God hath tolde vs that the preaching of the word is the ordinarie meanes of our ſaluation, ſhall we hope to be ſaued, although we contemne it, & neuer or very ſeldome heare it? Is not this plaine infidelitie and vnbeleefe, that when God ſaith one thing we will ſay another: when God ſaith yea, we will ſay, no. I hope not ſo. Yes ſurely that is it that ſtoppeth the way vnto Gods graces, and barreth vs out from repentance.

The ſecond let is this preſumption of gods mercy, for if men be ſharply reproued for their ſinnes, and exhorted vnto repentance, by and by they take couert, ſaying: God is mercifull, God is mercifull, as though God were made all of mercy, and that there were no iuſtice in him at all: and thus the wicked make Gods mercy an occaſion

casion to sinne, which thing the Prophete Nahum in the first of his prophesie doth sharpely reproue, the Lord (saith he) is slow to anger, but he is great in power, and wil not surely cleere the wicked. But bicause I haue spoken afore of this presuming and misapplying of Gods mercy, I will héere passe it ouer, willing you to note it as one speciall let vnto repentance.

The third hinderance is the example of the multitude, for that doth harden and imbolden men vnto sin. As when many birds flicker and flocke togither, they fall vppon the Net without any feare: but one or two alone will be afraide. Euen so the examples of many, and many sinne companions doe imbolden men to runne through the snares of Sathan without any mistrust. Therefore it is saide in Exodus 23. Thou shalt not follow a multitude to doe euill. This is the thing that hindreth a great number from god: for they neuer looke vp vnto God or to his word, but stare vpon the common doings of most men, and examples of the world, thinking if they do as the most men doe, as their forefathers haue done before them, they are cocke sure and of an euen

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ground. And hereupon ariſeth their diuelliſh prouerbe: Do as moſt men do, and the feweſt will ſpeake of you: but they haue forgotten S. Paules rule, Rom. 12. Faſhion not your ſelues like vnto this world. Theſe fellowes that ſtand vpon multitude, will reaſon thus: We ſée none of the great ones of the world, none of the noble, none of the rich, none of the wiſe and prudent, receiue this doctrine, but only a few ſhackrags and beggerly raſcals, and therefore it is a token that it is nothing worth, and that it is doubtfull, and not for vs to meddle withall. Lo what thoughts may créepe in our heades, and how ſlily Sathan may trump in our way, and blindfold vs, and leade vs away in the darke, by doting vs with the example of the multitude. Therefore let vs take hæde of thoſe pitfalles, which Sathan laieth in our way, and not be carried away with theſe thoughts and reaſons. The wicked beare themſelues in hand that they ſhall winne the game, and that the goale goeth on their ſide, and there is nothing but crowing long before it be day, and great triumphing amongeſt them before any ſtroke be ſtriken, and that bi-

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cause we be but a handfull of people, & they a great multitude, and that in a maner the whole world agreeth with them to practise our death. Thus the deuill doth cast a mist before their eies, and closely lead them away from Repentance. Therefore deare brethren, let vs stand fast in the word of the Lord, and not be caried away, or bowed quite downe with this raging streame of the multitude: but let vs know it to be one speciall engine of Sathan, whereby he driueth vs from repentance.

The fourth let vnto repentance, is long custome of sinne. For that taketh away all sense and feeling of sinne, and maketh it as it were another nature vnto vs: so that we may as wel alter nature, as shake it of whē it is once thus soldred vnto vs through long custome. Therefore it is said: Iere. 13.23. Can the black Moore change his skinne? or the Leopard hir spots? then may ye also do good that are accustomed to doe euil. Here the prophet affirmeth, that it is as hard to cure an olde disease that is bred in the bones, and to remedie a sinne that hath bene hatched and brought vp with vs, as to wash a blacke Moore white, or to change

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the ſpots of a Leopard, which cannot be without deſtroying of nature. And ſurely try it who wil, he ſhal find it as hard a matter to leaue an old cuſtome, whether it be of ſwearing, of gaming, of lying, or whoring, of euil company, or of any other ſinne, as to waſh an Ethiopian. Therfore it is written. Prou. 17. Though thou ſhouldeſt braie a foole in a morter, among wheate brayed with a peſtell: yet wil not his fooliſhneſſe depart from him. So that as long as we are in cuſtome with ſinne, the dore of Repentance is barred vp againſt vs.

The fift hinderance, is long eſcaping of puniſhment, for the wicked thereby are ſtarkened in ſinne, & driuen off from repentance, euen as an old theefe that hath ſtolne a long time, and eſcapeth both priſon and gallowes, is animated more boldly to proceede in his wickednesſe, thinking he ſhall ſo alwaies eſcape. So many filthy and loſe liuers goe forward in their abhominations without Repentance, thinking that bicauſe God doth not incontinently puniſh them, and ſhew ſome manifeſt iudgement and ſigne of his wrath vpon them, therefore they ſhalbe acquited for altogither. Where

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as contrariwise, if God should by and by strike them downe as soone as they had sinned, by thundring vpon one, and lightning vpon another, and raining fire and brimstone vpon the third, it would make them afraide. Hereupon it is said in Pet. 2.3.4. This first vnderstand, that there shall come in the last daies mockers which will walke after their lusts, and say, where is the promise of his comming? For since the fathers died, all things continue alike from the beginning of the creation. But let these men well know that when God hath delayed a long time, and prolonged the terme of the wicked, at length he will shew that although he waited for their repentance, yet he forgate not their misdeeds, but registred them before him, and packed them vp vpon a great heape, to encrease the terrour of his wrath.

The first hinderance, is the beholding of other mens ends. For when some men that haue liued a wicked, and an vngratious life, and haue bene notorious sinners euen to the world-ward, so that euery man could point at them: yet if vpon their deathbed they can saie a fewe good wordes

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and cry God mercy, and say their praiers, and forgiue all the world, and so die quietly, it is marualous to heare, how foolish people of the world, will exalt them, and iustifie them, saieng: He made a very good end as any man could make, he died as quiet as a Lambe, and set all things in good order before he died. Hærupon another wicked and monstrous berlet is encouraged to sinne. For thinketh he, such a man liued as lowsely as I, or any man else, and yet he made a very good end, and why may not I do so to, but alas these mens eyes are bleared, For to die quietly, is not to die godly, to cry good mercy for fashion, is not to haue God mercifull, to say a few praiers from teeth outward, is not to die in the faith of Christ, for many doe all this, and yet die miserably.

The last let, is hope of long life, for while men feed, and beset themselues in this hope they war drunken in sinne, and deferre the day of repentãce. As the rich man in the xij. of Luke, dreaming of his long life, cast of all thought of God, and of the other life, and of Christes comming, & of repentance, and all good things, and said within himself: Soule

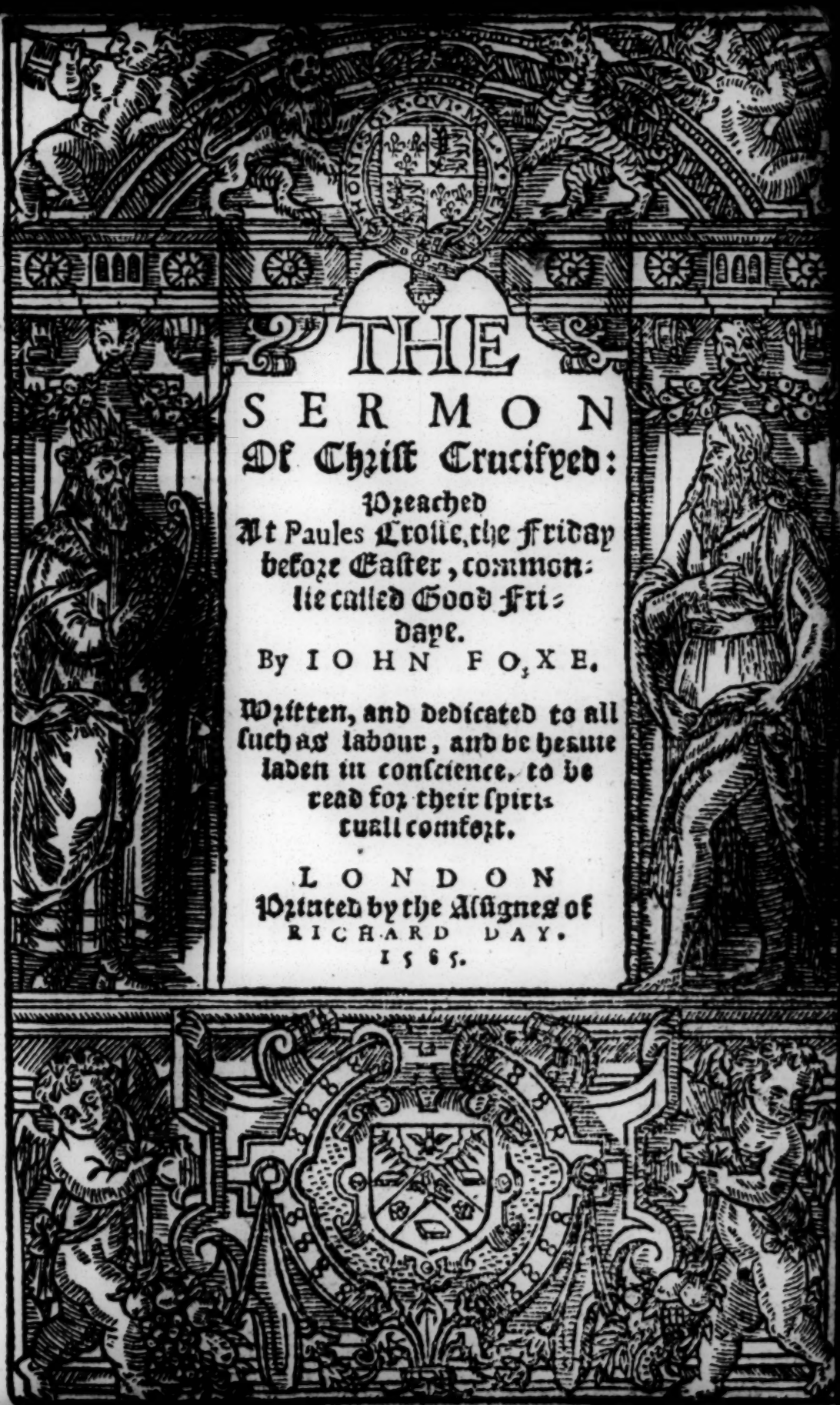
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thou hast much goodes layd vp for many yeeres, liue at ease, eate, drink, and take thy pastime. Thus the bleare eyed men of the world choke vp Repentance, and quite smother it, by doting themselues with hope of long life. Therefore my deare brethren, I beseech you by the mercies of God in the bowels of Iesus Christ, that none of all these common lettes may staie you from spedie and vnfaigned Repentance: But that you may ouerslide them all, least vnhappilie you being found without Repentance, and taken tardie in your sinnes, should all perish and be damned, according to Christes sentence. Wherefore in conclusion, let vs with godly Ezechias be afraide of Gods threatnings, foreow afore hand, stand in awe of GOD, examine our conscience, mourne for our sinnes, and lament inwardly, that when the wicked which haue swimmed in pleasures here below, shall enter into their eternall pains, we may then, I say there, haue euerlasting peace & rest, that when Iesus Christ shall appeare from heauen with all his holy Angels, we may haue crownes of glory, and raigne with our GOD, and our

Sauiour

Sauiour his Sonne, and all his Saintes and Angelles, in the middest of all ioy, in the Heauens for euermore. To the which ioy he bring vs all, which hath so dearely bought vs, Iesus Christ the righteous: to whom with the Father, and the holy Ghost be all honour, glory, praise, power, empire, and Dominion, nowe and for euermore. Amen.

FINIS.



THE SERMON Of Christ Crucifyed:

Preached At Paules Crosse, the Friday before Easter, commonlie called Good Friday.

By IOHN FOXE.

Written, and dedicated to all such as labour, and be heavie laden in conscience, to be read for their spirituall comfort.

LONDON
Printed by the Assignes of
RICHARD DAY.
1565.